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SATANISTS to volunteer in Florida schools following signing of new law that allows religious personnel to be employed in public schools

07/11/2024 // Laura Harris // 2.2K Views



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Public schools in Florida might soon be swarmed with members of the Satanic Temple as Gov. Ron DeSantis has put the call out for more school counselors following the signing of a state law allowing religious chaplains into public schools amid staffing shortages.

House Bill 931, which came into effect this July, permits outside organizations to provide "additional counseling and support to students." DeSantis has made it clear that the law is intended as a means to legally reintroduce Christian values into public education.

However, the bill has left the implementation of chaplaincy programs to individual school districts and only requires schools to list a volunteer's religion "if any." (Related: Satanic temple in Texas files lawsuit demanding "religious right" to sacrifice babies through abortion.)



The Satanic Temple sees this as an opportunity to challenge the unconstitutional favoritism toward Christianity. Satanic Temple co-founder and spokesperson Lucien Greaves argued that if Christian chaplains are granted access to students, then so should their members, to maintain the separation of church and state.

"You have theocrats pushing further and further, signing unconstitutional bills into law, and they realize there's no consequence," Greaves said. "They're giving everybody the impression that these types of things are legal, this is just the environment we're living in. And in that way, they're really numbing people to when these things actually do take effect, or when they are upheld by a corrupt judge who's just playing partisan politics."

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Greaves assured that there are no plans to introduce studies of the dark arts or Satanic rituals into classrooms. Instead, the Satanic Temple views Satan as a symbol of rebellion and resistance to authoritarianism, and Satanic Temple volunteers will allegedly use their platforms to expose clear violations of the constitutionally protected separation of church and state.

As of now, no Florida school districts have announced their participation in the chaplain program since schools are currently on summer recess. However, Greaves claimed that members of the Satanic Temple are prepared to volunteer once districts start signing up.

DeSantis declares Satanic Temple members will not be permitted to serve as school chaplains

The Satanic Temple is recognized as a religious organization by the United States and has long endorsed religious pluralism and equal rights. Some of its high-profile campaigns include the controversial After School Satan clubs and the proposed installation of a seven-foot-tall bronze statue of the occult deity Baphomet at the Oklahoma State Capitol building in Oklahoma City.

During the bill's signing back in April, DeSantis made it clear that the new law would not extend to permitting Satanic Temple members to serve as school chaplains.

"Some have said that if you do a school chaplain program that, somehow, you're going to have Satanists running around in all our schools. We're not playing those games in Florida. You don't have to worry about that," he said at the time.

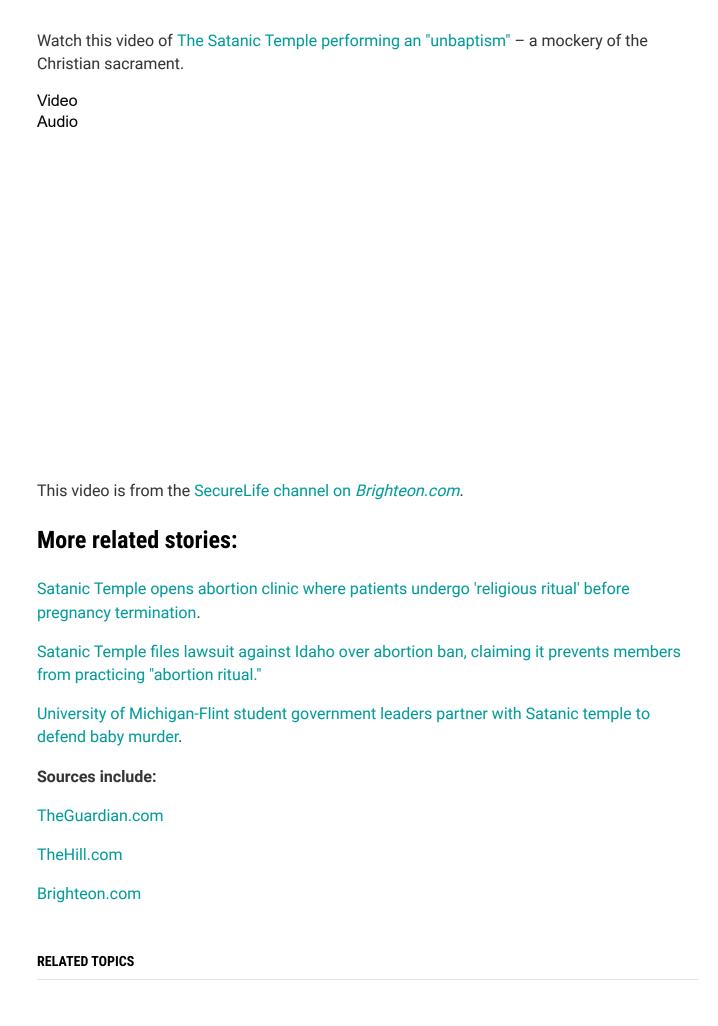
The Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) quickly issued a scathing rebuttal, stressing the inherent contradictions in the bill's premise.

"It was advanced with promises that public school chaplain positions would be open to everyone and that chaplains would provide spiritual counsel to students who wanted it, but would not proselytize or coerce students into religious activities," the FFRF said. "When Florida school districts consider this new law, they now know that those promises were false."

"If chaplains are not expected to push their religion onto students, why would DeSantis and others be so concerned about barring chaplains from disfavored minority religions?" continued the FFRF. "The assurance that the law will not favor Christian chaplains has been a bald-faced lie from the start."

"When [DeSantis] stood at the podium and told people they were going to put chaplains in schools, but Satanists wouldn't be allowed to, he was straight up lying to the school districts and opening them up to a liability that he's not going to cover," said Greaves. "There was nothing written in the law that would exclude us. He can't just declare something like that by fiat and expect it to be treated as law, and if he doesn't understand that, which likely he really doesn't, he obviously has no place being a governor."

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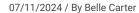


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